

Serial No.: 10/707,510  
Attorney Docket No.: F-775

Patent

### **Amendment To The Claims**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for processing a postage refund request for a mail piece comprising:

receiving a refund request including a tracking identifier from a user system;  
determining if the refund request is valid; and

if the refund request is not valid, initiating a refund error process,

if the refund request is valid, processing the refund request, wherein,

the determination of whether the refund request is valid includes determining whether the tracking identifier has been observed in a mail stream; and

monitoring the tracking identifier after processing the refund request in order to determine if the mail piece is used after a refund payment.

2. (canceled).

3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein:  
the refund error process includes a fraud inquiry.

4. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein:  
the refund error process includes notifying a postal authority.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
determining if the mail piece is associated with the user that submitted the refund request.

6. (original) The method of claim 4 further comprising:  
determining if a refund test period has completed; and

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if the refund test period is not completed, performing another determination of whether the mail piece has been observed in the mail stream.

7. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein:  
the tracking identifier includes a 22-digit delivery confirmation PIC code.
8. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein:  
the tracking identifier includes a PLANET code and a POSTNET code.
9. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein:  
the tracking identifier includes a postage meter serial number and a postage meter postage ascending register value.
10. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein:  
the tracking identifier includes a postal ID tag.
11. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
the refund request includes a user selection from a list of mail pieces.
12. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
the refund request is received from the user via a postage broker.
13. (canceled).
14. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein:  
the refund test period is variable.
15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein:  
the variable length of the refund test period depends upon the class of service of the mail piece.

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16. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
processing the refund request includes aggregating a group of valid refund  
~~request~~ requests received from a plurality of users associated with a postage broker.

17. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:  
processing the refund request includes aggregating a group of valid refund  
requests received from a plurality of users and sending a group refund request  
associated with the aggregated group of valid refund request to a postal authority.

18. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:  
sending aggregated refund request data to the postage broker.

19. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein:  
the tracking identifier is unique over a first period of time.

20. (New) A method for processing a postage refund request for a plurality of  
mail pieces comprising:

receiving a plurality of refund requests, each including an associated tracking  
identifier from each of a respective plurality of user systems;

determining if each of the refund requests is valid;

for each of the refund requests, if the refund request is not valid, initiating a  
refund error process,

for each of the refund requests, if the refund request is valid, processing the  
refund request, wherein,

the determination of whether the refund request is valid includes determining  
whether the tracking identifier has been observed in a mail stream and processing the  
refund request includes sending aggregated refund request data to a postage broker.

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21. (New) A method for processing a postage refund request for a mail piece comprising:

providing an interactive listing of at least two selections of recent postage transactions for a user;

receiving a refund request including a tracking identifier from a user system includes receiving a selection from the interactive listing;

determining if the refund request is valid;

if the refund request is not valid, initiating a refund error process,

if the refund request is valid, processing the refund request, wherein,

the determination of whether the refund request is valid includes determining whether the tracking identifier has been observed in a mail stream and wherein,

processing the refund request further comprises crediting a postage account held with a postage provider.

22. (New) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

monitoring the tracking identifier after processing the refund request in order to determine if the mail piece is used after a refund payment.